Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/421529365

Downloaded on Mar 27, 2024

ENTERTAINMENT

INSIDE:
PEOPLE — COMICS

The Gazette
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1977
PAGES 37 TO 48

MAKE EXTRA MONEY
DELIVER
The Gazette
IN YOUR AREA 878-1821

Hard times gave jazzman Rahsaan a fire

Photo by Henry Kalmen

Rahsaan Roland Kirk: Power and a raucous laugh.

Roland Kirk is dead. Long live Rahsaan.

I bet he would like that thought because he invariably got angry when someone called him Roland. "Name's Rahsaan," he would bark, his whole body expressing a frown from head to toe. And on that, he would turn away, grumbling assorted oaths. Abrupt.

He died like that, in a taxicab, on his way to the airport to what was going to be the next gig. Laid his head back and out like a light. Abrupt again.

Rahsaan was curt, quick tempered, adamant. His feelings — like his music — were expressed with as much punch as he could pack. Whether it was religion, politics or sex, whether it was love, he almost always threw it at you with gritting power and a raucous laugh that came from way down inside.

Rahsaan was bitter about life; he had been blind since childhood, from an overdose of eye medicine that had destroyed his sight — he never forgave the stupidity of his cruelty.

Last year, a stroke confined him to a wheelchair.

But his bitterness gave him the fire to overcome every obstacle he encountered. He could smile at you with a touch of his gentle hands and his always-keen ear was a menace. His memory was extraordinary. He built all this into genius.

Rahsaan could remember the name of a 'voice' he hadn't heard in years. He recognized a certain laugh-

Critics pay tribute to a jazz giant

Blind jazz musician Rahsaan Roland Kirk died Monday at 41, just hours after a concert at Indiana University.

A doctor said cause of death was a "long-standing chronic condition for which he was being treated at his hometown, Livingston, N.J.," but the exact condition was not disclosed. A year ago, the jazz great had suffered a stroke.

Rahsaan first appeared in Montreal at Expo '67. He was the first performer at Montreal's now-defunct In Concert jazz club, and the still-thriving Rising Sun.

Paying tribute to Rahsaan are 'Gazette' jazz critic Nighthawk, a long-time friend of the musician, and rock critic Juan Rodriguez, who says Rahsaan was his introduction to jazz.

ter. He could put three saxophones in his mouth and play them all, and how.

These were not tricks, they were high mountains that he overpowered with guts and grit and wit. He was a splendid musical being, a scholar, a perfectionist and had little patience for weakness in himself or for ignorance in others.

Rahsaan imparted his consciousness to musicians, to friends, to audiences who loved him, and he was generous with his teachings. But show him the slightest fault in your sincerity and he'd cuss you out in style.

He was the only human being I know who could sit in the middle of a party and pass comment on a quiet conversation held 15 feet away. He knew how to strain a room through the sieve of his interest.

I heard Rahsaan converse in gurgles and grunts with a tiny baby of a few months whom he fondled with loving care. He was loving her, as best he could, in her language.

And when my 70 year old mother complimented him, in French and at length after a performance, he listened very patiently, nodding his head occasionally, said "Merci, Madame, merci beaucoup" and kissed her hand. She was so delighted that he had understood her that I never had the heart to betray him.

And now there is strength, beauty and bright moments to remember. And as Rahsaan would have it, a lot of black classical music to tend to. So long, Ra!

— NIGHTHAWK

Appealed to rock fans

Rahsaan was an ambassador for jazz

Like many young Montrealers who grew up on rock music, I was seriously introduced to the power of jazz through Rahsaan Roland Kirk.

Some have called his music 'avant-garde,' or 'difficult.' Record company promotion men labelled him 'uncommercial' and hard to promote. But Kirk was the most receptive musician to those who would listen to him.

I remember interviewing him in 1971, when he patiently and laboriously gave me a history and feeling for the music that I will never forget.

Rahsaan was a real ambassador of jazz: he not only played in an uncompromising style, testing the limits of sound and endurance, but he delivered an immediacy that instinctively appealed to rock-oriented listeners who had previously been fed an inferior product.

His performances at the defunct Esquire Show Bar, a rhythm 'n' blues club that went to a jazz policy in the early 1970s, provided indelible memories. His shows attracted full houses of enthusiastic young fans who were literally bowled over by the power and sonority of his music.

Kirk fused the elements of American music as no other musician has done: He could take a 'far-out' motif and develop it to the outer reaches and then show the listener its mellow elementals.

He made New Orleans music — he disdained the use of the word 'Dixieland' — as alive and jumping as the best rock music today. Better, in fact.

He reminded us of the power of Duke Ellington, then complementing it with the joy of a jazzed-up version of Marvin Gaye's 'What's Going On.'

Kirk was a musical giant full of combustion, imagination and beautifully clear thematic ideas.

His heart attack in 1975, which left him partially paralyzed and very weak, slowed his music tragically. One couldn't listen to his last local gig, at the Rising Sun last July, without shedding tears. Here was a musical genius robbed of his physical powers, squeezing every ounce of energy in compensation to make it all real for us.

Despite his reputation as surly, he was kind and patient with anyone who wanted to hear real music. Like many other Montrealers, I shall never forget him.

— JUAN RODRIGUEZ

TV facing drop in audience; CBC tries to heat things up

RADIO & TELEVISION
By Joan Irwin

Broadcast executives are trying to remain calm and TV rating companies are trying not to seem unduly perplexed, but both groups are somewhat unnerved by the drop in overall TV audiences this season here and in the U.S.

The cold fact is that people just aren't turning on their sets as much as they used to, and nobody has yet found out why... or if they have they aren't saying.

According to the Canadian branch of the Nielsen rating company, there's been an audience drop of three to four per cent in this country over the past year. That means that between 250,000 and 300,000 households are tuning out, not just in prime time but throughout the day as well.

In the U.S. the situation is similar, with the number of sets in use down about three per cent. The American figures show only a small decline in viewing early in the week — Sunday through Wednesday — but a markedly lower number of sets in use on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

The exception in the U.S. is the Public Broadcasting Service whose audience, while not comparable to those of the big commercial networks, continues to grow at a steady pace.

• • •

Have you been wondering how to find out whether or not you've got enough home insulation, and if not what to do about it? If so, you're not the primary target of a new half-hour National Film Board special coming up tomorrow on CBC-TV at 10 p.m.

'The Hottest Show On Earth' is really aimed at people who haven't given much thought to the heat and money they're losing through poor insulation, or perhaps haven't paid heed to any aspects of the energy crunch.

Whichever category you're in, you won't know at first that the show has anything to do with energy or insulation, especially when you see the NFB symbol which expands and evolves in a most unusual way. It turns into a very well-endowed stripper, a cunning come-on for viewers who might not sit still for a solemn treatise on home insulation.

The half hour film is a combination of live action and excellent animation, with greyhound-broadcaster **David Suzuki** as host. It's fun to watch, and though it gets across some information about the Earth's supply of fossil fuels and the ways North Americans waste them the producers seem to have been carried away by the entertainment possibilities of their subject.

It may be that this treatment with all its merry pranks is the only way to get at an audience indifferent to energy conservation. Personally I found the film altogether too clever and cutesy-poo, and distinctly thin on practical advice about insulation.

The Hottest Show On Earth' was made in collaboration with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Though one of the department's free home conservation booklets is shown briefly in the film, nobody ever tells the audience that five booklets of specific information are available without charge if one writes to Ottawa for them.

An advertisement for the film will appear in tomorrow's 'Gazette' accompanied by a coupon for obtaining the books. In case the bad weather or something keeps you from getting the paper tomorrow, the address is: Home Conservation Kit, Box 3500, Station C, Ottawa, Ont. K1Y 4G1.

Booklets available are '100 Ways to Save Energy and Money', 'The Bill-payer's Guide to Furnace Servicing', 'Your Garbage Book', 'Keeping the Heat IN', and 'The Car Mileage Book.'

• • •

The splendid **'Olympiad'** series we saw last year on CTV won a well-deserved Emmy recently as the outstanding edited sports series of this year's International Emmy Awards, beating out competition from TV sports departments around the world.

The eleven-part series was a co-production of CTV and Cappy Productions, produced by **Bud Greenspan**. Each hour focused on a particular event (the Decathlon, the Marathon) or a particular aspect of Olympic competition (Women Gold Medalists, The Canadians, The Russian Athletes) or on Olympic Games which were notable for one reason or another.

Each program in the series was thoroughly researched and combined archival and contemporary film most effectively.

I'm something less than an all-out sports fan, but I found 'The Olympiad' series entirely compelling and often very moving. It was certainly the finest edited sports series I've ever seen and I'm delighted that its worth has been recognized by the International Emmy judges.

Comedy keeps ABC tops

PENNY MARSHALL
Plays 'Laverne'

NEW YORK — (AP) — For the fifth time in six weeks, ABC's Tuesday night comedy hit, 'Laverne and Shirley,' had a bigger audience than any other U.S. television program — 24.8 million homes.

The network continued to dominate the ratings, A. C. Nielsen figures show.

ABC had three of the top five programs during the week ending Dec. 4, including 'Happy Days,' on the air just before 'Laverne and Shirley,' and 'Three's Company,' shown right after the leader. 'Happy Days' was No. 2, and 'Three's Company' had the fifth highest audience rating.

ABC's continuing success with the Tuesday evening programs helped the network overcome a big push by CBS, which listed seven shows — including a tribute to actress Elizabeth Taylor and three Christmas specials — in the Top 10.

Copyright © 2024 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.
Powered by Newspapers.com